

OBSTETRICS.

UNDER THE CHARGE OF

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THE EFFECT OF ALCOHOL AS A DISINFECTANT IN OBSTETRIC PRACTICE.

In the *Deutsche medicinische Wochenschrift*, 1896, No. 6, AHLFELD and VAHLE describe experiments made to ascertain the value of alcohol as a practical disinfectant in obstetric practice. These experiments are in addition to some which they had previously made.

The results obtained by disinfecting the hands with alcohol have been variously assigned to the solvent properties of alcohol upon the fatty tissues, thus allowing bichloride of mercury and other antiseptics to come into immediate contact with bacteria contained upon the fingers. Others have asserted that alcohol does not destroy bacteria, but coagulates the epithelia of the skin, thus hardening them without preventing the passage of germs. It has been found, however, that alcohol destroys bacteria, but that its most efficient action is exerted upon micro-organisms which themselves contain water, or which are found in tissues containing water. By experiment Ahlfeld found that alcohol does not act simply by dissolving fatty substances upon the fingers, because ether, which is a better solvent of fat, is not so efficient as an antiseptic. Experiments with septic germs proved that alcohol exerts a direct influence in destroying virulent streptococci. Upon dried tissues containing bacteria, and upon bacteria from which water had been removed, alcohol exerted but feeble influence. An experiment was made with amniotic membrane to determine the influence of alcohol upon such tissues when wet and when dry; the result demonstrated in a striking manner the prompt action of alcohol when the membrane was moistened. Experiments upon the hands of attendants and nurses demonstrated clearly the value of alcohol as a disinfectant.

BULLET-WOUND OF THE PREGNANT UTERUS.

PRICHARD, in the *British Medical Journal*, 1896, No. 1832, reports the case of a patient, seven months advanced in pregnancy, who was shot with a revolver in the abdomen. She was admitted to the Bristol Infirmary two and a half hours afterward, in a condition of collapse. The bullet entered three inches above and two inches in front of the right anterior superior spine. There was little hemorrhage and no great distention of the abdomen. The foetal heart was easily heard. A probe would not pass through the abdominal wall. There was no distinct evidence that the bullet had penetrated the abdomen. Later in the evening the bullet was found half an inch above and five inches behind the left anterior superior spine, and was ex-

tracted under cocaine. As the patient's pulse was increasing in quickness, and the distention of the abdomen was greater, abdominal section was performed. The uterus was found to have been shot through, and accordingly was opened, and a dead fetus and placenta, both perforated by the bullet, were removed. The uterus was amputated, and the pedicle fixed outside the abdomen at the lower end of the wound. Three coils of small intestine had been perforated; these were closed with silk suture. An artery in the mesentery had been severed, and required ligature. The peritoneal cavity was emptied of blood and clots, and thoroughly washed out with boric solution. Drainage with gauze and a glass tube was employed. The patient survived six days and twelve hours. She had bowel-movements, and a sanguinous fluid, which became purulent, was removed from the drainage-tube. At the autopsy death had resulted from purulent peritonitis in three or four foci, the worst being inside the wound of exit. The intestines were completely sealed. The pedicle was also in good condition. The peritoneum had evidently become infected by the bullet after passing through the intestine. Examination of the body of the fetus showed that the shot passed through the pleura, diaphragm, and liver.

RUPTURE OF SAC AND DEATH OF FŒTUS IN ABDOMINAL PREGNANCY
AT FULL TERM, FOLLOWED BY RECOVERY.

EAGLESON reports in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1896, No. 8, the case of a woman, aged thirty-six years, who supposed that she had an abortion at three months, because she suffered from pain, hemorrhage, and the expulsion of a membranous cast of the uterus. This was followed by the development of an enlargement on the right side of the uterus, the true nature of which was not appreciated. Fœtal movements were finally felt, and the heart of the child was heard. She came under Eagleson's observation supposing that she was in labor. The patient's urine contained a large amount of albumin, and she gradually developed eclampsia. It was decided to dilate the uterus and deliver immediately. When the cervix was dilated, the uterus was found empty and but little enlarged. It was evident that the pregnancy was extrauterine. The patient was transferred to the Providence Hospital at Seattle, and abdominal section performed as soon as possible. A dead child was extracted, which had evidently perished some days previously. It was well formed, weighing six and three-quarters pounds. There were but few adhesions of the fœtal sac, and these were easily separated. The placenta was firmly attached to the top and posterior surface of the uterus, and to the right broad ligament. The principal nutrient vessel of the placenta, as large as a small lead-pencil, came from the under surface of the mesentery of the ileum. Commencing peritonitis was present. The abdominal cavity was thoroughly washed with hot boiled water, and a glass tube and gauze drain were inserted. The patient made a good recovery.

THE INFLUENCE OF TOXINS UPON FŒTAL DEVELOPMENT.

CHARRIN and NOBÉCOUR, in the *Archives de Physiologie*, 1896, No. 1, give the results of interesting observations upon infants born of mothers who had